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Church Announces New Edition of Scriptures

Posted by [Stephen Smoot](#) | [0 comments](#)

2013 edition of Standard Works. Source: LDS.org.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [has announced](#) the release of a new edition of its standard works, with an electronic format already online and the print edition to be released in August 2013. As announced on the church's website, the new edition of the scriptures "includes revisions to study aids, new photos, updated maps, and adjustments to chapter and section headings."

Many of the changes include updating historical information contained in the section headings of the Doctrine and Covenants. Particularly historians with the [Joseph Smith Papers Project](#) have made new discoveries relating to the historical background and development of the different sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. According to the website, "Adjustments have been made to correct inaccurate facts, to provide more precise dating of many sections, and, in some cases, to supply historical context that better aids in the understanding of the sections."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles clarified that the new edition of the scriptures is not likely to have a dramatic effect on the meaning of the text of the scriptures themselves. "This new edition incorporates adjustments that will be a blessing to Church members in years to come," Andersen said. "But members should not feel that they need to purchase a new set of scriptures, particularly since all of the adjustments are available in digital formats at no cost. Changes to the scriptural text include spelling, minor typographical, and

punctuation corrections.”

However, some new features of the 2013 edition could prove significant in reshaping church members’ understanding of the scriptures. A new feature of both Official Declarations 1 and 2, authoritative decrees from past church presidents that signaled the end of the practice of plural marriage and extended the priesthood to men in the Church regardless of race, respectively, are introductory paragraphs giving historical context to these declarations.

The new [introductory paragraph](#) to Official Declaration 1 reads:

“The Bible and the Book of Mormon teach that monogamy is God’s standard for marriage unless He declares otherwise (see 2 Samuel 12:7–8 and Jacob 2:27, 30). Following a revelation to Joseph Smith, the practice of plural marriage was instituted among Church members in the early 1840s (see section 132). From the 1860s to the 1880s, the United States government passed laws to make this religious practice illegal. These laws were eventually upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. After receiving revelation, President Wilford Woodruff issued the following Manifesto, which was accepted by the Church as authoritative and binding on October 6, 1890. This led to the end of the practice of plural marriage in the Church.”

The new [introductory paragraph](#) to Official Declaration 2 reads:

“The Book of Mormon teaches that “all are alike unto God,” including “black and white, bond and free, male and female” (2 Nephi 26:33). Throughout the history of the Church, people of every race and ethnicity in many countries have been baptized and have lived as faithful members of the Church. During Joseph Smith’s lifetime, a few black male members of the Church were ordained to the priesthood. Early in its history, Church leaders stopped conferring the priesthood on black males of African descent. Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice. Church leaders believed that a revelation from God was needed to alter this practice and prayerfully sought guidance. The revelation came to Church President Spencer W. Kimball and was affirmed to other Church leaders in the Salt Lake Temple on June 1, 1978. The revelation removed all restrictions with regard to race that once applied to the priesthood.”

Additional significant changes have been made to the introductory material to the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price. These changes seem to reflect responsiveness to new scholarship that has modified previous understanding of the church’s scriptural texts.

The revised introduction to the Book of Mormon [now reads](#), in part, “The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God’s dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel. . . . After thousands of years, [the people of the Book of Mormon] were destroyed except the Lamanites, and they are among the ancestors of the American Indians.”

In describing the Book of Abraham, one of the texts comprising the Pearl of Great Price, the new introduction [reads](#), “*The Book of Abraham*. An inspired translation of the writings of Abraham. Joseph Smith began the translation in 1835 after obtaining some Egyptian papyri. The translation was published serially in the Times and Seasons beginning March 1, 1842, at Nauvoo, Illinois.”

Material has also been deleted from the the previous edition, including the “Church History Chronology”, which has been moved [online](#).

For full details concerning the 2013 edition of the scriptures, visit <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/new-edition?lang=eng>.

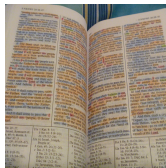
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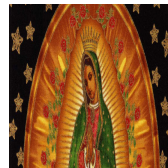
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